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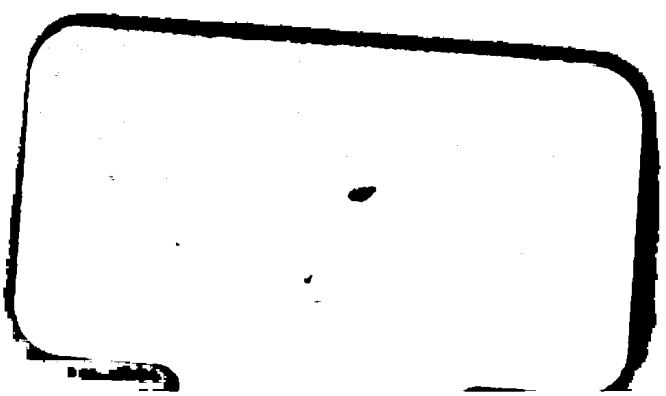

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THE GARROTERS.

Farce.

THE GARROTERS

Farce

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BY

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THE GARROTERS.

(Farce.)

I.

AT the window of her apartment in Hotel Bellingham, Mrs. Roberts stands looking out into the early night-fall. A heavy snow is driving without, and from time to time the rush of the wind and the sweep of the flakes against the panes are heard. At the sound of hurried steps in the anteroom, Mrs. Roberts turns from the window, and runs to the *portière*, through which she puts her head.

Mrs. Roberts: "Is that you, Edward? So dark here! We ought really to keep the gas turned up all the time."

Mr. Roberts, in a muffled voice, from without: "Yes, it 's I."

Mrs. Roberts: "Well, hurry in to the fire, do! Ugh, what a storm! Do you suppose anybody will come? You must be half frozen, you poor thing! Come quick, or you 'll certainly perish!" She flies from the *portière* to the fire burning on the hearth, pokes it, flings on a log, jumps back, brushes from her dress with a light shriek the sparks driven out upon it, and continues talking incessantly in a voice lifted for her husband to hear in the anteroom. "It was only a spark! If I 'd dreamed it was any such storm as this, I should never have let you go out

in it in the world. It was n't at all necessary to have the flowers. ~~I could have got on perfectly well~~, and I believe *now* the table would look better without them. The chrysanthemums would have been quite enough; and I know you 've taken more cold. I could tell it by your voice as soon as you spoke; and just as quick as they 're gone to-night I 'm going to have you bathe your feet in mustard and hot water, and take eight of aconite, and go straight to bed. And I don't want you to eat very much at dinner, dear, and you must be sure not to drink any coffee, or the aconite won't be of the least use." She turns and encounters her husband, who enters through the *portière*, his face pale, his eyes wild, his white necktie pulled out of knot, and his

shirt-front rumpled. "Why, Edward, what in the world is the matter? What has happened?"

Roberts, sinking into a chair: "Get me a glass of water, Agnes — wine — whiskey — brandy —"

Mrs. Roberts, bustling wildly about: "Yes, yes. But what — Bella! Bridget! Maggy! — Oh, I 'll go for it myself, and I *won't* stop to listen! Only — only don't die!" While Roberts remains with his eyes shut and his head sunk on his breast in token of extreme exhaustion, she disappears and reappears through the door leading to her chamber, and then through the *portière* cutting off the dining-room. She finally descends upon her husband with a flagon of cologne in one hand, a small decanter

of brandy in the other, and a wine-glass held in the hollow of her arm against her breast. She contrives to set the glass down on the mantel, and fill it from the flagon, then she turns with the decanter in her hand, and while she presses the glass to her husband's lips, begins to pour the brandy on his head. "Here! this will revive you, and it 'll refresh you to have this cologne on your head."

Roberts, rejecting a mouthful of the cologne with a furious sputter, and springing to his feet: "Why, you 've given me the cologne to *drink*, Agnes! What are you about? Do you want to poison me? Is n't it enough to be robbed at six o'clock on the Common, without having your head soaked in brandy,

~~and your whole system scented up like a barber's shop, when you get home?~~"

Mrs. Roberts: "Robbed?" She drops the wine-glass, puts the decanter down on the hearth, and carefully bestowing the flagon of cologne in the wood-box, abandons herself to justice: "Then let them come for me at once, Edward! If I could have the heart to send you out in such a night as this for a few wretched rosebuds, I 'm quite equal to poisoning you. Oh, Edward! *who* robbed you?"

Roberts: "That 's what I don't know." He continues to wipe his head with his handkerchief, and to sputter a little from time to time. "All I know is that when I got — phew! — to that dark spot by the Frog Pond, just by — phew! — that

little group of — phew! — evergreens, you know — phew!"

Mrs. Roberts: "Yes, yes; go on! I can bear it, Edward."

Roberts: "— a man brushed heavily against me, and then hurried on in the other direction. I had unbuttoned my coat to look at my watch under the lamp-post, and after he struck against me I clapped my hand to my waistcoat, and — phew!"

Mrs. Roberts: "Waistcoat! Yes!"

Roberts: "— found my watch gone."

Mrs. Roberts: "What! Your watch? The watch Willis gave you? ~~Made out of the gold that he mined himself when he first went out to California?~~ Don't ask me to believe it, Edward! But I 'm only too glad that you escaped with your

life. Let them have the watch and ~~welcome.~~ Oh, my dear, dear husband!" She approaches him with extended arms, and then suddenly arrests herself. "But you've got it on!"

Roberts, with as much returning dignity as can comport with his dishevelled appearance: "Yes; I took it from him." At his wife's speechless astonishment: "I went after him and took it from him." He sits down, and continues with resolute calm, while his wife remains standing before him motionless: "Agnes, I don't know how I came to do it. ~~I would n't have believed I could do it.~~ I've never thought that I had much courage — ~~physical courage~~; but when I felt my watch was gone, a sort of frenzy came over me. I was n't hurt; and for

the first time in my life I realized what an abominable outrage theft was. The thought that at six o'clock in the evening, in the very heart of a great city like Boston, an inoffensive citizen could be assaulted and robbed, made me furious. I did n't call out. I simply buttoned my coat tight round me and turned and ran after the fellow."

Mrs. Roberts: "Edward!"

Roberts: "Yes, I did. He had n't got half a dozen rods away — it all took place in a flash — and I could easily run him down. He was considerably larger than I — "

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh!"

Roberts: "— and he looked young and very athletic; but these things did n't seem to make any impression on me."

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, I wonder that you live to tell the tale, Edward!"

Roberts: "Well, I wonder a little at myself. I don't set up for a great deal of—"

Mrs. Roberts: "But I always knew you had it! Go on. Oh, when I tell Willis of this! Had the robber any accomplices? Were there many of them?"

Roberts: "I only saw one. ~~And I saw that my only chance was to take him at a disadvantage.~~ I sprang upon him, and pulled him over on his back. I merely said, 'I'll trouble you for that watch ~~of mine, if you please~~,' jerked open his coat, snatched the watch from his pocket—I broke the chain, I see—and then left him and ran again. He did n't make the slightest resistance, nor

utter a word. Of course it would n't do for him to make any noise about it, and I dare say he was glad to get off so easily." With affected nonchalance: "I 'm pretty badly rumpled, I see. He fell against me, and a scuffle like that does n't improve one's appearance."

Mrs. Roberts, very solemnly: "Edward! I don't know what to say! ~~Of course~~ it makes my blood run cold to realize what you've been through, and to think what might have happened; but I think you behaved splendidly. Why, I never heard of such perfect heroism! You need n't tell *me* that he made no resistance. There was a deadly struggle — your necktie and everything about you shows it. And you need n't think there was only one of them —"

Roberts, modestly: "I don't believe there were more."

Mrs. Roberts: "Nonsense! There are *always* two! I've read the accounts of those garrotings. And to think you not only got out of their clutches alive, but got your property back — Willis's watch! Oh, what *will* Willis say? But I know how proud of you he'll be. Oh, I wish I could scream it from the house-tops. Why didn't you call the police?"

Roberts: "I didn't think — I hadn't time to think."

Mrs. Roberts: "No matter. I'm glad you have *all* the glory of it. I don't believe you half realize what you've been through ~~now~~. And perhaps this was the robbers' first attempt, and it will be a lesson to them. Oh yes! I'm

glad you let them escape, Edward. They may have families. If every one behaved as you 've done, there would soon be an end of garroting. But, oh! I can't bear to think of the danger you've run. And I want you to promise me never, never to undertake such a thing again!"

Roberts: "Well, I don't know —"

Mrs. Roberts: "Yes, yes; you must! Suppose you had got killed in that awful struggle ~~with those reckless wretches tugging to get away from you!~~ Think of the children! Why, you might have burst a blood-vessel! Will you promise, Edward? Promise this instant, on your bended knees, just as if you were in a court of justice!" Mrs. Roberts's excitement mounts, and she flings herself

at her husband's feet, and pulls his face down to hers with the arm she has thrown about his neck. "Will you promise?"

Mrs. Crashaw, entering unobserved: "Promise you what, Agnes? The man does n't smoke *now*. What more can you ask?" She starts back from the spectacle of Roberts's disordered dress. "Why, what 's happened to you, Edward?"

Mrs. Roberts, springing to her feet: "Oh, you may well ask that, Aunt Mary! Happened? You ought to fall down and worship him! And you *will* when you know what he 's been through. He 's been robbed!"

Mrs. Crashaw: "Robbed? What nonsense! Who robbed him? *Where* was he robbed?"

Mrs. Roberts: "He was attacked by two garroters —"

Roberts: "No, no —"

Mrs. Roberts: "Don't speak, Edward! I *know* there were two. On the Common. Not half an hour ago. As he was going to get me some rosebuds. ~~In the midst of this terrible storm.~~"

Mrs. Crashaw: "Is this true, Edward?"

Mrs. Roberts: Don't answer, Edward! One of the band threw his arm round Edward's neck — so." She illustrates by garroting Mrs. Crashaw, who disengages herself with difficulty.

Mrs. Crashaw: "Mercy, child! ~~What are you doing to my lace?~~"

Mrs. Roberts: "And the other one snatched his watch, and ran as fast as he could."

Mrs. Crashaw: "Willis's watch? Why, he 's got it on."

Mrs. Roberts, with proud delight: "Exactly what I said when he told me." Then, very solemnly: "And do you know *why* he 's got it on? — 'Sh, Edward! I *will* tell! Because he ran after them and took it back again."

Mrs. Crashaw: "Why, they might have killed him!"

Mrs. Roberts: "Of *course* they might. But *Edward* did n't care. ~~The idea of being robbed at six o'clock on the Common made him so furious that he scorned to cry out for help, or call~~ the police, or ~~anything~~; but he just ran after them —"

Roberts: "Agnes! Agnes! There was only *one.*"

Mrs. Roberts: "Nonsense, Edward!

How could you tell, so excited as you were?—And caught hold of the largest of the wretches—a perfect young giant—"

Roberts: "No, no; not a *giant*, my dear."

Mrs. Roberts: "Well, he was *young*, *any*way!—And flung him on the ground." She advances upon Mrs. Crashaw in her enthusiasm.

Mrs. Crashaw: "Don't you fling *me* on the ground, Agnes! ~~I won't have it.~~"

Mrs. Roberts: "And tore his coat open, while all the rest were tugging at him, and snatched his watch, and then—and then just walked coolly away."

Roberts: "No, my dear; I ran as fast as I could."

Mrs. Roberts: "Well, *ran*. It 's quite

the same thing, and I 'm just as proud of you as if you had walked. Of course you were not going to throw your life away."

Mrs. Crashaw: "I think he did a very silly thing in going after them at all."

Roberts: "Why, of course, if I 'd thought twice about it, I should n't have done it."

Mrs. Roberts: "Of course you would n't, dear! And that 's what I want him to promise, Aunt Mary: never to do it again, no matter *how* much he 's provoked. I want him to promise it right here in your presence, Aunt Mary!"

Mrs. Crashaw: "I think it 's much more important he should put on another collar and — shirt, if he 's going to see company."

Mrs. Roberts: "Yes: go right off at once, Edward. How you *do* think of things, Aunt Mary! I really suppose I should have gone on all night and never noticed his looks. Run, Edward, and do it, dear. But — kiss me first! Oh, it *don't* seem as if you could be alive and well after it all! Are you sure you 're not hurt?"

Roberts, embracing her: "No; I 'm all right."

Mrs. Roberts: "And you 're not injured internally? Sometimes they 're injured internally — are n't they, Aunt Mary? — and it does n't show till months afterward. Are you sure?"

Roberts, making a cursory examination of his ribs with his hands: "Yes, I think so."

Mrs. Roberts: "And you don't feel any bad effects from the cologne, *now?* Just think, Aunt Mary, I gave him cologne to drink, and poured the brandy on his head, when he came in! And if I've poisoned him I'm quite willing to die for it. Oh, quite! I would gladly take the blame of it before the whole world."

Mrs. Crashaw: "Well, for pity's sake, let the man go and make himself decent. There's your bell, now."

Mrs. Roberts: "Yes, do go, Edward. But — kiss me —"

Mrs. Crashaw: "He *did* kiss you, Agnes. Don't be a simpleton!"

Mrs. Roberts: "Did he? Well, kiss me again, then, Edward. And now do go, dear. M–m–m–m." The inarticulate

endearments represented by these signs terminate in a wild embrace, protracted half-way across the room, in the height of which Mr. Willis Campbell enters.

Willis, pausing in contemplation: "Hello! What's the matter? What's she trying to get out of you, Roberts? Don't you do it, anyway, old fellow."

Mrs. Roberts, in an ecstasy of satisfaction: "Willis! Oh, you've come in time to see him just as he is. Look at him, Willis!" In the excess of her emotion she twitches her husband about, and with his arm fast in her clutch, presents him in the disadvantageous effect of having just been taken into custody. Under these circumstances Roberts's attempt at an expression of diffident heroism fails;

he looks sneaking, he looks guilty, and his eyes fall under the astonished regard of his brother-in-law.

Willis: "What's the matter with him? What's he been doing?"

Mrs. Roberts: "'Sh, Edward!—What's he been doing? What does he look as if he had been doing?"

Mrs. Crashaw: "Agnes—"

Willis: "He looks as if he had been signing the pledge. And he—smells like it."

Mrs. Roberts: "For shame, Willis! I should think you'd sink through the floor. Edward, not a word! I *am* ashamed of him, if he *is* my brother."

Willis: "Why, what in the world's up, Agnes?"

Mrs. Roberts: "Up? He's been

robbed! — robbed on the Common, not five minutes ago! A whole gang of garroters surrounded him ~~under the Old Elm — or just where it used to be~~ — and took his watch away! And he ran after them, and knocked the largest of the gang down, and took it back again. He was n't hurt, but we're afraid he 's been injured internally; ~~he may be bleeding internally, now~~ — Oh, do you think he is, Willis? Don't you think we ought to send for a physician? — That, and the cologne I gave him to drink. It 's the brandy I poured on his head makes him smell so. ~~And he all so exhausted he could n't speak, and I did n't know what I was doing, either~~; but he 's promised — oh yes, he 's promised! — never, never to do it again." She again

flings her arms about her husband, and then turns proudly to her brother.

Willis: "Do you know what it means, Aunt Mary?"

Mrs. Crashaw: "Not in the least! But I've no doubt that Edward can explain, after he's changed his linen —"

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, yes, do go, Edward! Not but what I should be proud ~~and happy~~ to have you appear just as you are before the whole world, if it was only to put Willis down with his jokes about your absent-mindedness, ~~and his boasts about those California desperadoes~~ of his."

Roberts: "Come, come, Agnes! I *must* protest against your —"

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, I know it does n't become me to praise your courage, dar-

ling! But I should like to know what Willis would have done, with all his California experience, if a garroter had taken his watch?"

Willis: "I should have let him keep it, and pay five dollars a quarter himself for getting it cleaned and spoiled. Anybody but a literary man would. How many of them were there, Roberts?"

Roberts: "I only saw one."

Mrs. Roberts: "But of course there were more. How could he tell, in the dark and excitement? And the one he did see was a perfect giant; ~~so you can imagine what the rest must have been like.~~"

Willis: "Did you really knock him down?"

Mrs. Roberts: "Knock him down? Of course he did."

Mrs. Crashaw: "Agnes, *will* you hold your tongue, and let the men alone?"

Mrs. Roberts, whimpering: "I can't, Aunt Mary. And you could n't, if it was yours."

Roberts: "I pulled him over backwards."

Mrs. Roberts: "There, Willis!"

Willis: "And grabbed your watch from him?"

Roberts: "I was in quite a frenzy; I really hardly knew what I was doing—"

Mrs. Roberts: "And he did n't call for the police, or anything—"

Willis: "Ah, that showed presence of mind! He knew it would n't have been any use."

Mrs. Roberts: "And when he had got his watch away from them, he just let

them go, because they had families dependent on them."

Willis: "I should have let them go in the first place; but you behaved handsomely in the end, Roberts, there 's no denying that. And when you came in she gave you cologne to drink, and poured brandy on your head. It must have revived you. I should think it would wake the dead."

Mrs. Roberts: "I was all excitement, Willis —"

Willis: "No, I should think from the fact that you had set the decanter here on the hearth, ~~and put your cologne into~~ the wood-box, you were perfectly calm, Agnes." He takes them up and hands them to her. "Quite as calm as usual." The door-bell rings.

Mrs. Crashaw: "Willis, *will* you let that ridiculous man go away and make himself presentable before people begin to come?" The bell rings violently, peal upon peal.

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, my goodness, what's that? It's the garroters — I know it is; and we shall all be murdered in our beds!"

Mrs. Crashaw: "What in the world can it —"

Willis: "Why don't your girl answer the bell, Agnes? Or I'll go, myself." The bell rings violently again.

Mrs. Roberts: "*No*, Willis, you sha'n't! Don't leave me, Edward! Aunt Mary! — Oh, if we *must* die, let us all die together! Oh, my poor children! Ugh! What's that?" The servant-

maid opens the outer door, and uttering a shriek, rushes in through the drawing-room *portière.*

Bella, the Maid: "Oh, my goodness! Mrs. Roberts, it 's Mr. Bemis!"

Mrs. Roberts: "Which Mr. Bemis?"

Roberts: "What 's the matter with him?"

Mrs. Crashaw: "Why doesn't she show him in?"

Willis: "Has *he* been garroting somebody too?"

Mr. Bemis, appearing through the *portière:* "I — I beg your pardon, Mrs. Roberts. I ought n't to present myself in this state — I — But I thought I 'd better stop on my way home and report, so that my son need n't be alarmed at my absence when he comes. I —" He

stops, exhausted, and regards the others with a wild stare, while they stand taking note of his disordered coat, his torn vest, and his tumbled hat. "I 've just been robbed —"

Mrs. Roberts: "Robbed? Why, *Edward* has been robbed too."

Bemis: "— coming through the Common —"

Mrs. Roberts: "Yes, *Edward* was coming through the Common."

Bemis: "— of my watch —"

Mrs. Roberts, in rapturous admiration of the coincidence: "Oh, and it was Edward's *watch* they took!"

Willis: "It 's a parallel case, Agnes. Pour him out a glass of cologne to drink, and rub his head with brandy. And you might let him sit down and

"WHY, EDWARD, WHAT IN THE WORLD IS THE MATTER?"

"I'VE JUST BEEN ROBBED!"

rest while you're enjoying the excitement."

Mrs. Roberts, in hospitable remorse: "Oh, what am I inking of! Here, Edward — or no, you're too weak, you must n't. Willis, *you* help me to help him to the sofa."

Mrs. Crashaw: "I think you'd better help him off with his overcoat and his arctics." To the maid: "Here, Bella, if you have n't quite taken leave of your wits, undo his shoes."

Roberts: "*I 'll* help him off with his coat —"

Bemis: "Careful! careful! I may be injured internally."

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, if you only *were*, Mr. Bemis, perhaps I could persuade Edward that he was too: I *know* he is.

Edward, don't exert yourself! Aunt Mary, will you *stop* him, or do you all wish to see me go distracted here before your eyes?"

Willis, examining the overcoat which Roberts has removed: "Well, you won't have much trouble buttoning and unbuttoning this coat for the present."

Mr. Bemis: "They tore it open, and tore my watch from my vest pocket—"

Willis, looking at the vest: "I see. Pretty lively work. Were there many of them?"

Bemis: "There must have been two, at least—"

Mrs. Roberts: "There were half a dozen in the gang that attacked Edward."

Bemis: "One of them pulled me violently over on my back—"

Mrs. Roberts: "Edward's put *his* arm round his neck and choked him."

Mrs. Crashaw: "Agnes!"

Mrs. Roberts: "I *know* he did, Aunt Mary."

Bemis: "And the other tore my watch out of my pocket."

Mrs. Roberts: "*Edward's* —"

Mrs. Crashaw: "Agnes, I 'm thoroughly ashamed of you. *Will* you stop interrupting?"

Bemis: "And left me lying in the snow."

Mrs. Roberts: "And then he ran after them, and snatched his watch away again in spite of them all; and he did n't call for the police, or anything, because it was their first offence, and he could n't bear to think of their suffering families."

Bemis, with a stare of profound astonishment: "Who?"

Mrs. Roberts: "Edward. Did n't I *say* Edward, all the time?"

Bemis: "I thought you meant me. I did n't think of pursuing them; but you may be very sure that if there had been a policeman within call — of course there was n't one within cannon-shot — I should have handed the scoundrels over without the slightest remorse."

Roberts: "Oh!" He sinks into a chair with a slight groan.

Willis: "What is it?"

Roberts: "'Sh! Don't say anything. But — stay here. I want to speak with you, Willis."

Bemis, with mounting wrath: "I should not have hesitated an instant to

give the rascal in charge, no matter *who* was dependent upon him — no matter if he were my dearest friend, my own brother."

Roberts, under his breath: "Gracious powers!"

Bemis: "And while I am very sorry to disagree with Mr. Roberts, I can't help feeling that he made a great mistake in allowing the ruffians to escape."

Mrs. Crashaw, with severity: "I think you are quite right, Mr. Bemis."

Bemis: "Probably it was the same gang attacked us both. After escaping from Mr. Roberts they fell upon me."

Mrs. Crashaw: "I have n't a doubt of it."

Roberts, *sotto voce* to his brother-in-

law: "I think I 'll ask you to go with me to my room, Willis. Don't alarm Agnes, please. I — I feel quite faint."

Mrs. Roberts, crest-fallen: "I can't feel that Edward was to blame. Ed — Oh, I suppose he 's gone off to make himself presentable. But Willis — Where 's Willis, Aunt Mary?"

Mrs. Crashaw: "Probably gone with him to help him."

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, he *saw* how unstrung poor Edward was! Mr. Bemis, I think you 're quite prejudiced. How could Edward help their escaping? I think it was quite enough for him, single-handed, to get his watch back." A ring at the door, and then a number of voices in the anteroom. "I do believe they 're all there! I 'll just run

out and prepare your son. He would be dreadfully shocked if he came right in upon you." She runs into the anteroom, and is heard without: "Oh, Dr. Lawton! Oh, Lou, dear! *Oh*, Mr. Bemis! How can I ever tell you? Your poor father! No, no, I *can't* tell you! You must n't ask me! It 's too hideous! And you would n't believe me if I did."

Chorus of anguished voices: "What? what? what?"

Mrs. Roberts: "They 've been robbed! Garroted on the Common! And, *oh*, Dr. Lawton, I 'm so glad *you 've* come! They 're both injured internally, but I *wish* you 'd look at Edward first."

Bemis: "Good heavens! Is that Mrs. Roberts's idea of preparing my

son? And his poor young wife!" He addresses his demand to Mrs. Crashaw, who lifts the hands of impotent despair.

II.

In Mr. Roberts's dressing-room, that gentleman is discovered tragically confronting Mr. Willis Campbell, with a watch uplifted in either hand.

Willis: "Well?"

Roberts, gasping: "My — my watch!"

Willis: "Yes. How comes there to be two of it?"

Roberts: "Don't you understand? When I went out I — did n't take my watch — with me. I left it here on my bureau."

Willis: "Well?"

Roberts: "Oh, merciful heavens! don't you see? Then I could n't have been robbed!"

Willis: "Well, but whose watch did you take from the fellow that did n't rob you, then?"

Roberts: "His own!" He abandons himself powerlessly upon a chair. "Yes: I left my own watch here, and when that person brushed against me in the Common, I missed it for the first time. I supposed he had robbed me, and ran after him, and —"

Willis: "Robbed *him!*"

Roberts: "Yes."

Willis: "Ah, ha, ha, ha! I, hi, hi, hi! O, ho, ho, ho!" He yields to a series of these gusts and paroxysms, bowing up and down, and stamping to

"'MY—MY WATCH!'"

and fro, and finally sits down exhausted, and wipes the tears from his cheeks. "Really, this thing will kill me. What are you going to do about it, Roberts?"

Roberts, with profound dejection and abysmal solemnity: "I don't know, Willis. Don't you see that it must have been — that I must have robbed — Mr. Bemis?"

Willis: "Bemis!" After a moment for tasting the fact. "Why, so it was! Oh, Lord! oh, Lord! And was poor old Bemis that burly ruffian? that blood-thirsty gang of giants? that — that — oh, Lord! oh, Lord!" He bows his head upon his chair-back in complete exhaustion, demanding, feebly, as he gets breath for the successive questions, "What are you going to d-o-o-o? What

shall you s-a-a-a-y? How can you expla-a-ain it?"

Roberts: "I can do nothing. I can say nothing. I can never explain it. I must go to Mr. Bemis and make a clean breast of it; but think of the absurdity — the ridicule!"

Willis, after a thoughtful silence: "Oh, it is n't *that* you 've got to think of. You 've got to think of the old gentleman's sense of injury and outrage. Did n't you hear what he said — that he would have handed over his dearest friend, his own brother, to the police?"

Roberts: "But that was in the supposition that his dearest friend, his own brother, had intentionally robbed him. You can't imagine, Willis —"

Willis: "Oh, I can imagine a great

many things. It 's all well enough for you to say that the robbery was a mistake; but it was a genuine case of garroting, as far as the assault and taking the watch go. He 's a very pudgicky old gentleman."

Roberts: "He is!"

Willis: "And I don't see how you 're going to satisfy him that it was all a joke. Joke? It *was n't* a joke! It was a real assault and a *bona fide* robbery, and Bemis can prove it."

Roberts: "But he would never insist —"

Willis: "Oh, I don't know about that. He 's pretty queer, Bemis is. You can't say what an old gentleman like that will or won't do. If he should choose to carry it into court —"

Roberts: "Court!"

Willis: "—it might be embarrassing. And anyway it would have a very strange look in the papers."

Roberts: "The papers! Good gracious!"

Willis: "Ten years from now, a man that heard you mentioned would forget all about the acquittal, and say: 'Roberts? Oh yes! Was n't he the one they sent to the House of Correction for garroting an old friend of his on the Common?' You see it would n't do to go and make a clean breast of it to Bemis."

Roberts: "I see."

Willis: "What will you do?"

Roberts: "I must never say anything to him about it. Just let it go."

Willis: "And keep his watch? I don't see how you could manage that. What would you do with the watch? You might sell it, of course —"

Roberts: "Oh no; I *could n't* do that."

Willis: "You might give it away to some deserving person; but if it got him into trouble —"

Roberts: "No, no; that would n't do, either."

Willis: "And you can't have it lying around; Agnes would be sure to find it, sooner or later."

Roberts: "Yes."

Willis: "Besides, there 's your conscience. Your conscience would n't *let* you keep Bemis's watch away from him. And if it would, what do you suppose Agnes's conscience would do when she

came to find it out? Agnes has n't got much of a head — the want of it seems to grow upon her; but she 's got a conscience as big as the side of a house."

Roberts: "Oh, I see, I see."

Willis, coming up, and standing over him, with his hands in his pockets: "I tell you what, Roberts, you 're in a box."

Roberts, abjectly: "I know it, Willis; I know it. What do you suggest? You *must* know some way out of it."

Willis: "It is n't a simple matter like telling them to start the elevator down when they could n't start her up. I 've got to think it over." He walks to and fro, Roberts's eyes helplessly following his movements. "How would it do to — No, that would n't do, either."

Roberts: "What would n't?"

Willis: "Nothing. I was just thinking — I say, you might — Or, no, you could n't."

Roberts: "Could n't what?"

Willis: "Nothing. But if you were to — No; up a stump that way too."

Roberts: "Which way? For mercy's sake, my dear fellow, don't seem to get a clew if you have n't it. It 's more than I can bear." He rises and desperately confronts Willis in his promenade. "If you see any hope at all — "

Willis, stopping: "Why, if you were a different sort of fellow, Roberts, the thing would be perfectly easy."

Roberts: "Very well, then. What sort of fellow do you want me to be? I 'll be any sort of fellow you like."

Willis: "Oh, but you could n't! With that face of yours, and that confounded conscience of yours behind it, you would give away the whitest lie that was ever told."

Roberts: "Do you wish me to lie? Very well, then, I will lie. What is the lie?"

Willis: "Ah, now you 're talking like a man! I can soon think up a lie, if you 're game for it. Suppose it was n't so very white? Say a delicate blond?"

Roberts: "I should n't care if it were as black as the ace of spades."

Willis: "Roberts, I honor you! It is n't everybody who could steal an old gentleman's watch, and then be so ready to lie out of it. Well, you *have* got courage — both kinds — moral and physical."

Roberts: "Thank you, Willis. Of course I don't pretend that I should be willing to lie, under ordinary circumstances. But for the sake of Agnes and the children — I don't want any awkwardness about the matter; it would be the death of me. Well, what do you wish me to say? Be quick; I don't believe I could hold out for a great while. I don't suppose but what Mr. Bemis would be reasonable even if I —"

Willis: "I'm afraid we could n't trust him. The only way is for you to take the bull by the horns."

Roberts: "Yes?"

Willis: "You will not only have to lie, Roberts, but you will have to wear an air of innocent candor at the same time."

Roberts: "I — I'm afraid I could n't manage that. What is your idea?"

Willis: "Oh, just come into the room with a laugh, when we go back, and say in an off-hand way: 'By-the-way, Agnes, Willis and I made a remarkable discovery in my dressing-room. We found my watch there on the bureau. Ha, ha, ha!' Do you think you could do it?"

Roberts: "I — I don't know."

Willis: "Try the laugh now."

Roberts: "I 'd rather not — now."

Willis: "Well, try it, anyway."

Roberts: "Ha! ha! ha!"

Willis: "Once more."

Roberts: "Ha! ha! ha!"

Willis: "Pretty ghastly. But I guess you can come it."

Roberts: "I 'll try. And then what?"

Willis: "And then you say: 'I had n't put it on when I went out, and when I got after that fellow and took it back, I was simply getting somebody else's watch.' Then you hold out both watches to her, and laugh again. Everybody laughs, and crowds round you to examine the watches, and you make fun and crack jokes at your own expense all the time, and pretty soon old Bemis says: 'Why, this is *my* watch, *now!*' and you laugh more than ever —"

Roberts: "I 'm afraid I could n't laugh when he said that. I don't believe I could laugh. It would make my blood run cold."

Willis: "Oh no, it would n't. You 'd be in the spirit of it by that time."

Roberts: "Do you think so? Well?"

Willis: "And then you say: 'Well, this is the most remarkable coincidence I ever heard of. I didn't get my own watch from the fellow, but I got yours, Mr. Bemis,' and then you hand it over to him, and say, 'Sorry I had to break the chain in getting it from him,' and then everybody laughs again, and — and that ends it."

Roberts, with a profound sigh: "Do you think that would end it?"

Willis: "Why, certainly. It'll put old Bemis in the wrong, don't you see? It'll show that instead of letting the fellow escape to go and rob *him*, you attacked him and took Bemis's property back from him yourself. Bemis wouldn't have a word to say. All you've got

to do is to keep up a light, confident manner."

Roberts: "But what if it should n't put Bemis in the wrong? What if he should n't say or do anything that we 've counted upon, but something altogether different?"

Willis: "Well, then, you must trust to inspiration, and adapt yourself to circumstances."

Roberts: "Would n't it be rather more of a joke to come out with the facts at once?"

Willis: "On you it would. And a year from now — say next Christmas — you could get the laugh on Bemis, that way. But if you were to risk it now, there 's no telling how he 'd take it. He 's so indignant he might insist upon

leaving the house. But with this plan of mine—"

Roberts, in despair: "I could n't, Willis. I don't feel light, and I don't feel confident; and I could n't act it. If it were a simple lie—"

Willis: "Oh, lies are never simple. They require the exercise of all your ingenuity. If you want something simple, you must stick to the truth, and throw yourself on Bemis's mercy."

Roberts, walking up and down in great distress: "I can't do it; I can't do it. It's very kind of you to think it all out for me; but"—struck by a sudden idea— "Willis, why should n't *you* do it?"

Willis: "I?"

Roberts: "You 're good at those

things. You have so much *aplomb*, you know. *You* could carry it off, you know, first-rate."

Willis, as if finding a certain fascination in the idea: "Well, I don't know —"

Roberts: "And I could chime in on the laugh. I think I could do that, if somebody else was doing the rest."

Willis, after a moment of silent reflection: "I *should* like to do it. I should like to see how old Bemis would look when I played it on him. Roberts! I *will* do it. Not a word! I should *like* to do it. Now you go on and hurry up your toilet, old fellow; you need n't mind me here. I'll be rehearsing."

Mrs. Roberts, knocking at the door,

outside: "Edward, are you *never* coming?"

Roberts: "Yes, yes; I 'll be there in a minute, my dear."

Willis: "Yes, he 'll be there. Run along back, and keep it going till we come. Roberts, I would n't take a thousand dollars for this chance."

Roberts: "I 'm glad you like it."

Willis: "Like it? Of course I do. Or, no! Hold on! Wait! It won't do! No; you must take the leading part, and I 'll support you, and I 'll come in strong if you break down. That 's the way we have got to work it. You must make the start."

Roberts: "Could n't you make it better, Willis? It 's your idea."

Willis: "No; they 'd be sure to

suspect me, and they can't suspect you of anything — you 're so innocent. The illusion will be complete!"

Roberts, very doubtfully: "Do you think so?"

Willis: "Yes. Hurry up. Let me unbutton that collar for you."

III.

Mrs. Roberts, surrounded by her guests, and confronting from her sofa Mr. Bemis, who still remains sunken in his arm-chair, has apparently closed an exhaustive recital of the events which have ended in his presence there. She looks round with a mixed air of self-denial and self-satisfaction to read the admiration of her listeners in their sympathetic countenances.

Mrs. Roberts: "Was n't it awful?"

Dr. Lawton, with an ironical sigh of profound impression: "Well, Mrs. Roberts, you are certainly the most lavishly

hospitable of hostesses. Every one knows what delightful dinners you give; but these little dramatic episodes which you offer your guests, by way of appetizer, are certainly unique. Last year an elevator stuck in the shaft with half the company in it, and this year a highway robbery, its daring punishment and its reckless repetition — what the newspapers will call 'A Triple Mystery' when it gets to them — and both victims among our commensals! Really, I don't know what more we could ask of you, unless it were the foot-padded foot-pad himself as a commensal. If this sort of thing should become *de rigueur* in society generally, I don't know what 's to become of people who have n't your invention."

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, it 's all very well to make fun, now, Dr. Lawton; but if you had been here when they first came in —"

Young Mrs. Bemis: "Yes, indeed, I think so too, Mrs. Roberts. If Mr. Bemis — Alfred, I mean — and papa had n't been with me when you came out there to prepare us, I don't know what I should have done. I should certainly have died, or gone through the floor." She looks fondly up into the face of her husband for approval, where he stands behind her chair, and furtively gives him her hand for pressure.

Young Mr. Bemis: "Somebody ought to write to the Curwens — Mrs. Curwen, that is — about it."

Mrs. Bemis, taking away her hand: "Oh, yes, papa, *do* write!"

"SHE LOOKS FONDLY UP INTO THE FACE OF HER HUSBAND FOR APPROVAL."

Lawton: "I will, my dear. Even Mrs. Curwen, dazzling away in another sphere — hemisphere — and surrounded by cardinals and all the other celestial lights there at Rome, will be proud to exploit this new evidence of American enterprise. I can fancy the effect she will produce with it."

Mrs. Roberts: "And the Millers — what a shame they could n't come! How excited they would have been! — that is, Mrs. Miller. Is their baby very bad, Doctor?"

Lawton: "Well, vaccination is always a very serious thing — with a first child. I should say, from the way Mrs. Miller feels about it, that Miller would n't be able to be out for a week to come yet."

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, how ridiculous you are, Doctor!"

Bemis, rising feebly from his chair: "Well, now that it 's all explained, Mrs. Roberts, I think I 'd better go home; and if you 'll kindly have them telephone for a carriage —"

Mrs. Roberts: "*No,* indeed, Mr. Bemis! We shall not let you go. Why, the *idea!* You must stay and take dinner with us, just the same."

Bemis: "But in this state —"

Mrs. Roberts: "Oh, never mind the *state.* You look perfectly well; and if you insist upon going I shall know that you bear a grudge against Edward for not arresting him. Wait! We can put you in perfect order in just a second." She flies out of the room, and then comes

swooping back with a needle and thread, a fresh white necktie, a handkerchief, and a hair-brush. "There! I can't let you go to Edward's dressing-room, because he's there himself, and the children are in mine, and we've had to put the new maid in the guest-chamber — you *are* rather cramped in flats, that's true; that's the worst of them — but if you don't mind having your toilet made in public, like the King of France — "

Bemis, entering into the spirit of it: "Not the least, but — " He laughs, and drops back into his chair.

Mrs. Roberts, distributing the brush to young Mr. Bemis, and the tie to his wife, and dropping upon her knees before Mr. Bemis: "Now, Mrs. Lou, you just whip off that crumpled tie and whip

on the fresh one, and, *Mister* Lou, you give his hair a touch, and I'll have this torn button-hole mended before you can think." She seizes it and begins to sew vigorously upon it.

Mrs. Crashaw: "Agnes, you are the most ridiculously sensible woman in the country."

Lawton, standing before the group, with his arms folded and his feet well apart, in an attitude of easy admiration: "The Wounded Adonis, attended by the Loves and Graces. Familiar Pompeiian fresco."

Mrs. Roberts, looking around at him: "I don't see a great many Loves."

Lawton: "She ignores us, Mrs. Crashaw. And after what you've just said!"

Mrs. Roberts: "Then why don't you do something?"

Lawton: "The Loves *never* do anything — in frescos. They stand round and sympathize. Besides, we are waiting to administer an anæsthetic. But what I admire in this subject even more than the activity of the Graces is the serene dignity of the Adonis. I have seen my old friend in many trying positions, but I never realized till now all the simpering absurdity, the flattered silliness, the senile coquettishness, of which his benign countenance was capable"

Mrs. Roberts: "Don't mind him a bit, Mr. Bemis; it 's nothing but —"

Lawton: "Pure envy. I own it."

Bemis: "All right, Lawton. Wait till —"

Mrs. Roberts, making a final stitch, snapping off the thread, and springing to her feet, all in one: "There! Have you finished, ~~Mr. and Mrs. Lou~~? Well, then, take this lace handkerchief, and draw it down from his neck and pin it in his waistcoat, and you have —"

Lawton, as Mr. Bemis rises to his feet: "A Gentleman of the Old School. Bemis, you look like a miniature of yourself by Malbone. Rather flattered, but — recognizable."

Bemis, with perfectly recovered gayety: "Go on, go on, Lawton: I can understand your envy. I can pity it."

Lawton: "Could you forgive Roberts for not capturing the garroter?"

Bemis: "Yes, I could. I could give the garroter his liberty, and present him

with an admission to the Provident Wood-yard, where he could earn an honest living for his family."

Lawton, compassionately: "You *are* pretty far gone, Bemis. Really, I think somebody ought to go for Roberts."

Mrs. Roberts, innocently: "Yes, indeed! Why, what in the world can be keeping him?" A nurse-maid enters and beckons Mrs. Roberts to the door with a glance. She runs to her; they whisper; and then Mrs. Roberts, over her shoulder: "That ridiculous great boy of mine says he can't go to sleep unless I come and kiss him good-night."

Lawton: "Which ridiculous great boy, I wonder? — Roberts, or Campbell? But I did n't know they had gone to bed!"

Mrs. Bemis: "You 're too bad, papa! You know it 's little Neddy."

Mrs. Roberts, vanishing: "Oh, I don't mind his nonsense, Lou. I 'll fetch them both back with me."

Lawton, after making a melodramatic search for concealed listeners at the doors: "Now, friends, I have a revelation to make in Mrs. Roberts's absence. I have found out the garroter — the assassin."

All the others: "What!"

Lawton: "He has been secured —"

Mrs. Crashaw, severely: "Well, I 'm very glad of it."

Young Bemis: "By the police?"

Mrs. Bemis, incredulously: "Papa!"

Bemis: "But there were several of them. Have they all been arrested?"

Lawton: "There was only one, and none of him has been arrested."

Mrs. Crashaw: "Where is he, then?"

Lawton: "In this house."

Mrs. Crashaw: "Now, Dr. Lawton, you and I are old friends — I should n't like to say *how* old; but if you don't instantly be serious, I — I 'll carry my rheumatism to somebody else."

Lawton: "My *dear* Mrs. Crashaw, you know how much I prize that rheumatism of yours! I will be serious — I will be only too serious. The garroter is Mr. Roberts himself."

All, horror-struck: "Oh!"

Lawton: "He went out without his watch. He thought he was robbed, but he was n't. He ran after the supposed thief, our poor friend Bemis here, and

took Bemis's watch away, and brought it home for his own."

Young Bemis: "Yes, but —"

Mrs. Bemis: "But, papa —"

Bemis: "How do you know it? I can see how such a thing might happen, but — how do you know it *did?*"

Lawton: "I divined it."

Mrs. Crashaw: "Nonsense!"

Lawton: "Very well, then; I read of just such a case in the *Advertiser* a year ago. It occurs annually — in the newspapers. And I'll tell you what, Mrs. Crashaw — Roberts found out his mistake as soon as he went to his dressing-room; and that ingenious nephew of yours, who 's closeted with him there, has been trying to put him up to something — to some game."

Mrs. Crashaw: "Willis has too much sense. He would know that Edward could n't carry out any sort of game."

Lawton: "Well, then, he 's getting Roberts to let *him* carry out the game."

Mrs. Crashaw: "Edward could n't do that, either."

Lawton: "Very well, then, just wait till they come back. Will you leave me to deal with Campbell?"

Mrs. Crashaw: "What are you going to do?"

Young Bemis: "You must n't forget that he got us out of the elevator, sir."

Mrs. Bemis: "We might have been there yet if it had n't been for him, papa."

Mrs. Crashaw: "I should n't want Willis mortified."

Bemis: "Nor Mr. Roberts annoyed. We 're fellow-sufferers in this business."

Lawton: "Oh, leave it to me, leave it to me! I 'll spare their feelings. Don't be afraid. Ah, there they come! Now don't say anything. I 'll just step into the anteroom here."

Roberts, entering the room before Campbell, and shaking hands with his guests: "Ah, Mr. Bemis; Mrs. Bemis; Aunt Mary! You 've heard of our comical little coincidence — our — Mr. Bemis and my —" He halts, confused, and looks around for the moral support of Willis, who follows hilariously.

Willis: "Greatest joke on record! But I won't spoil it for you, Roberts. Go on!" In a low voice to Roberts: "And don't look so confoundedly down

in the mouth. They won't think it's a joke at all."

Roberts, with galvanic lightness: "Yes, yes — *such* a joke! Well, you see — you see —"

Mrs. Crashaw: "See *what*, Edward? *Do* get it out!"

Willis, jollily: "Ah, ha, ha!"

Roberts, lugubriously: "Ah, ha, ha!"

Mrs. Bemis: "How funny! Ha, ha, ha!"

Young Mr. Bemis: "Capital! capital!"

Mr. Bemis: "Excellent!"

Willis: "Go on, Roberts, do! or I shall die! Ah, ha, ha!"

Roberts, in a low voice of consternation to Willis: "Where was I? I can't go on unless I know where I was."

Willis, sotto voce to Roberts: "You were n't anywhere! For Heaven's sake, make a start!"

Roberts, to the others, convulsively: "Ha, ha, ha! I supposed all the time, you know, that I had been robbed, and — and —"

Willis: "Go on! *go* on!"

Roberts, whispering: "I can't do it!"

Willis, whispering: "You've *got* to! You're ~~the beaver that clomb~~ the tree. Laugh ~~naturally~~, now!"

Roberts, with a staccato groan, which he tries to make pass for a laugh: "And then I ran after the man —" He stops, and regards Mr. Bemis with a ghastly stare.

Mrs. Crashaw: "What is the matter with you, Edward? Are you sick?"

Willis: "Sick? No! Can't you see that he can't get over the joke of the thing? It 's killing him." To Roberts: "Brace up, old man! You 're doing it splendidly."

Roberts, hopelessly: "And then the other man — the man that had robbed me — the man that I had pursued — ugh!"

Willis: "Well, it *is* too much for him. I shall have to tell it myself, I see."

Roberts, making a wild effort to command himself: "And so — so — this man — man — ma —"

Willis: "Oh, good Lord —" Dr. Lawton suddenly appears from the anteroom and confronts him. "Oh, the devil!"

Lawton, folding his arms, and fixing his eyes upon him: "Which means that you forgot I was coming."

Willis: "Doctor, you read a man's symptoms at a glance."

Lawton: "Yes; and I can see that you are in a bad way, Mr. Campbell."

Willis: "Why don't you advertise, Doctor? Patients need only enclose a lock of their hair, and the color of their eyes, with one dollar to pay the cost of materials, which will be sent, with full directions for treatment, by return mail. Seventh son of a seventh son."

Lawton: "Ah, don't try to jest it away, my poor friend. This is one of those obscure diseases of the heart — induration of the pericardium — which,

if not taken in time, result in deceitfulness above all things, and desperate wickedness."

Willis: "Look here, Dr. Lawton, what are you up to?"

Lawton: "Look here, Mr. Campbell, what is your little game?"

Willis: "*I* don't know what you 're up to." He shrugs his shoulders and walks up the room.

Lawton, shrugging his shoulders and walking up the room abreast of Campbell: "*I* don't know what your little game is." They return together, and stop, confronting each other.

Willis: "But if you think I 'm going to give myself away —"

Lawton: "If you suppose I 'm going to take you at your own figure —"

They walk up the room together, and return as before.

Willis: "Mrs. Bemis, what is this unnatural parent of yours after?"

Mrs. Bemis, tittering: "Oh, I 'm sure I can't tell."

Willis: "Aunt Mary, you used to be a friend of mine. Can't you give me some sort of clew?"

Mrs. Crashaw: "I should be ashamed of you, Willis, if you accepted anybody's help."

Willis, sighing: "Well, this is pretty hard on an orphan. Here I come to join a company of friends at the fireside of a burgled brother-in-law, and I find myself in a nest of conspirators." Suddenly, after a moment: "Oh, *I* understand. Why, I ought to have seen at once.

But no matter — it 's just as well. I 'm sure that we shall hear Dr. Lawton leniently, and make allowance for his well-known foible. Roberts is bound by the laws of hospitality, and Mr. Bemis is the father-in-law of his daughter."

Mrs. Bemis, in serious dismay: "Why, Mr. Campbell, what do you mean?"

Willis: "Simply that the mystery is solved — the double garroter is discovered. I 'm sorry for you, Mrs. Bemis; and no one will wish to deal harshly with your father when he confesses that it was he who robbed Mr. Roberts and Mr. Bemis. All that they ask is to have their watches back. Go on, Doctor! How will that do, Aunt Mary, for a little flyer?"

Mrs. Crashaw: "Willis, I declare I

never saw anybody like you!" She embraces him with joyous pride.

Roberts, coming forward, anxiously: "But, my dear Willis —"

Willis, clapping his hand over his mouth, and leading him back to his place: "We can't let you talk now. I've no doubt you'll be considerate, and all that, but Dr. Lawton has the floor. Go on, Doctor! Free your mind! Don't be afraid of telling the whole truth! It will be better for you in the end." He rubs his hands gleefully, and then thrusting the points of them into his waistcoat pockets, stands beaming triumphantly upon Lawton.

Lawton: "Do you think so?" With well-affected trepidation: "Well, friends, if I must confess this — this —"

Willis: "High-handed outrage. Go on."

Lawton: "I suppose I must. I shall not expect mercy for myself — perhaps you'll say that, as an old and hardened offender, I don't deserve it. But I had an accomplice — a young man very respectably connected, and who, whatever his previous life may have been, had managed to keep a good reputation; a young man a little apt to be misled by overweening vanity and the ill-advised flattery of his friends; but I hope that neither of you gentlemen will be hard upon him, but will consider his youth, and perhaps his congenital moral and intellectual deficiencies, even when you find your watches — on Mr. Campbell's person." He leans forward, rubbing

his hands, and smiling upon Campbell. "How will that do, Mr. Campbell, for a flyer?"

Willis, turning to Mrs. Crashaw: "One ahead, Aunt Mary?"

Lawton, clasping him by the hand: "No, generous youth: even!" They shake hands, clapping each other on the back with their lefts, and joining in the general laugh.

Bemis, coming forward, jovially: "Well, now, I gladly forgive you both — or whoever *did* rob me — if you 'll only give me back my watch."

Willis: "*I* have n't got your watch."

Lawton: "Nor I."

Roberts, rather faintly, and coming reluctantly forward: "I — I have it, Mr. Bemis." He produces it from one waist-

coat pocket and hands it to Bemis. Then, visiting the other: "And what 's worse, I have my own. I don't know how I can ever explain it, or atone to you for my extraordinary behavior. Willis thought you might finally see it as a joke, and I 've done my best to pass it off lightly —"

Willis: "And you succeeded. You had all the lightness of a sick hippopotamus."

Roberts: "I 'm afraid so. I 'll have the chain mended, of course. But when I went out this evening I left my watch on my dressing-table, and when you struck against me in the Common I missed it, and supposed I had been robbed, and I ran after you and took yours —"

Willis: "Being a man of the most violent temper and the most desperate courage —"

Roberts: "But I hope, my dear sir, that I did n't hurt you seriously."

Bemis: "Not at all — not the least." Shaking him cordially by both hands: "I 'm all right. Mrs. Roberts has healed all my wounds with her skilful needle; I 've got on one of your best neckties, and this lace handkerchief of your wife's, which I 'm going to keep for a souvenir of the most extraordinary adventure of my life —"

Lawton: "Oh, it 's an old newspaper story, Bemis, I told you."

Willis: "Well, Aunt Mary, I wish Agnes were here now to see Roberts in his character of *moral* hero. He 'done'

it with his little hatchet, but he waited to make sure that Bushrod was all right before he owned up."

Mrs. Roberts, appearing: "Who, Willis?"

Willis: "A very great and good man: George Washington."

Mrs. Roberts: "I thought you meant Edward."

Willis: "Well, I don't suppose there *is* much difference."

Mrs. Crashaw: "The robber has been caught, Agnes."

Mrs. Roberts: "Caught? Nonsense! You don't mean it! How can you trifle with such a subject? I know you are joking! Who is it?"

~~Jenny~~ *Bemis:* "You never could guess —"

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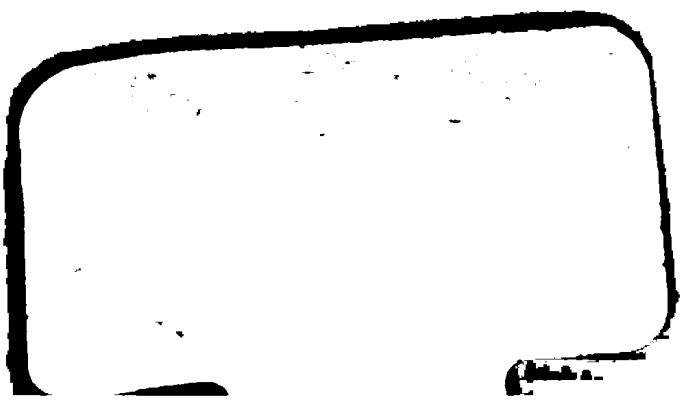
Mrs. Bemis: "Never in the world!"

Mrs. Roberts: "I don't wish to. But oh, Mr. Bemis, I've just come from my own children, and you must be merciful to his family!"

Bemis: "For your sake, dear lady, I will."

Bella, between the *portières:* "Dinner is ready, Mrs. Roberts."

Mrs. Roberts, passing her hand through Mr. Bemis's arm: "Oh, then you must go in with me, and tell me all about it."

THE END.

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